

Western Westmoreland Agricultural Development Plan

Reviving Agriculture in Western Westmoreland: A Vision for Prosperity and Sustainability



This plan emphasizes the integration of agriculture with tourism, the empowerment of youth and women, and the development of infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

Introduction & Background

Western Westmoreland stands at the threshold of a transformative opportunity. Agriculture has the potential to absorb a significant portion of the region's unemployed, particularly youth and women, while simultaneously creating lasting value for communities and the national economy. With fertile land, skilled people, and growing demand from sectors like tourism, agriculture can once again become a cornerstone of prosperity.

There was a time, particularly in the early 1970s, when agricultural infrastructure was more robust—when returning Jamaicans could establish farms with ease, supported by local nurseries like the one in St. James, where seedlings of all kinds were readily available. Such facilities not only provided planting material but also trained people in grafting and propagation—essential skills for both livelihood and entrepreneurship. This model remains relevant today. Reviving these nurseries, whether in every parish or in clusters, would restore a vital support system for small farmers and aspiring agriculturists.

The Coconut Industry Board Example

Among Jamaica's most successful agricultural bodies stands the Coconut Industry Board, a prime example of effective institutional support. The Board has done exceptional work in providing high-quality seedlings, technical training, and industry development. Yet, it is disheartening that even today, coconut milk for the nation's iconic Sunday rice and peas often comes from Thailand. Jamaica has the capacity to produce its own, and communities across the west must be supported to take action—planting coconut trees and engaging with the Board to scale up production. The infrastructure and support exist; what is needed now is widespread participation and sustained leadership.



Regional Context

Geographic Scope

Western Westmoreland, encompassing the parish council divisions of Negril, Little London, Friendship, Grange Hill and Sheffield, boasts fertile lands, a rich agricultural heritage, and proximity to tourism hubs.

Current Challenges

Declining youth participation in farming, underutilized lands, and limited agro-processing facilities.

Key Stakeholders

Local farmers, RADA, Ministry of Agriculture, tourism sector, and community organizations.

Opportunities

Growing demand for local produce in tourism, potential for orchard crop expansion, and upcoming infrastructure developments.



Situational Analysis

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Fertile soils
- Favorable climate
- Established farming communities

Weaknesses

- Limited access to modern farming techniques
- Limited access to markets

Opportunities

- Expansion of agro-tourism
- Development of orchard crops
- Youth engagement in agriculture

Threats

- Climate change impacts
- Competition from imported goods

Vision, Mission & Objectives



The vision aims to transform Western Westmoreland into a model of sustainable and profitable agriculture, integrating modern practices with traditional knowledge. Our mission is to empower local communities through agricultural innovation, education, and market access. Key objectives include increasing youth participation in agriculture, promoting the establishment of cottage industries and agro-processing facilities within the region, and reducing dependency on imported produce.



Target Groups & Beneficiaries



Smallholder Farmers

Especially women and youth who will benefit from training, resources, and market access



Local Entrepreneurs

Those interested in agro-processing and value-added product development



Tourism Businesses

Hotels, restaurants, and attractions seeking fresh, local produce for their operations

1.Orchard Crop Development

This entails the promotion of the planting of high-demand fruits such as mangoes, coconuts, lychee, citrus such as oranges, ortaniques, limes, grapefruits, seville oranges and papayas.

Orchard crops represent a powerful opportunity for economic growth, environmental protection, and export development. With strong international demand and a growing local hospitality sector eager for fresh, local fruit, crops such as mango, avocado, coconut, breadfruit, papaya, and lime offer strategic advantages.

Benefits of Orchard Crop Development



Reduces Soil Erosion

Tree roots help stabilize hillsides and prevent soil loss



Generates Income

Creates sustainable revenue streams for farmers and communities



Enhances Air Quality

Trees improve local air quality and contribute to environmental health



Mitigates Climate Change

Orchards serve as carbon sinks and help moderate local climate



Encourages Pollination

Supports honey production and ecosystem services



Promotes Biodiversity

Enhances ecological resilience through diverse plantings

Government Support for Orchard Development

A core challenge remains: most orchard crops require three to four years before yielding returns. Government support is essential during this early phase.



Two-year subsidies for young farmers

Financial support during the critical establishment phase



Survival-based financial incentives

Tied to crop health and management practices



Land allocation programs

Underutilized government-owned land leased to young farmers



Ongoing technical support

From JACRA, Forestry Department, RADA and other agencies

2. Agro-Processing Initiatives

Support the development of community-based facilities for producing value-added items such as tomato paste (which is used widely in the hospitality sector in pizza-making), and fruit juices, while also empowering communities to utilize the agro-processing facility in Savanna-la-Mar. Collaborate with agencies such as RADA's Home Economics Unit, the Bureau of Standards, JBDC and the Scientific Research Council to equip youth and women with the tools and training needed to establish sustainable cottage industries.



Key Components

- Community-based processing facilities
- Training in food safety and production
- Product development support
- Market access facilitation
- Packaging and branding assistance

3. Nursery Establishment & Land Access

Nursery Establishment

Work with the respective divisional leaders to establish a central plant nursery for seedling distribution and training in grafting techniques.

- Provide high-quality planting material
- Train farmers in propagation techniques
- Serve as demonstration sites
- Support research and development

Land Access Programs

Pursue the facilitation of leasing of government-owned lands to young farmers with clear cultivation plans.

- Identify underutilized public lands
- Develop transparent application processes
- Provide tenure security
- Include technical support packages



4. Risk Management and Climate Resilience

Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices

- Drought-resistant crop varieties
- Water harvesting systems
- Contour farming on hillsides
- Agroforestry integration

Disaster Preparedness

- Early warning systems
- Crop insurance programs
- Emergency response planning
- Post-disaster recovery support

Technical Assistance

- RADA training programmes
- Jamaica Agricultural Society support
- Jamaica 4-H Clubs youth engagement
- JACRA regulatory guidance

Collaborate with agencies such as RADA, Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), Jamaica 4-H Clubs and the Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (JACRA), Development Bank of Jamaica, Forestry Department, Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM) for farmer training.

5. Tourism and Agriculture: Twin Engines of Growth

Jamaica's tourism sector welcomes millions of visitors annually, many of whom crave authentic local produce—papayas, mangoes, pineapples, bananas. Yet, much of the food consumed in hotels and restaurants is still imported. This paradox represents both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity.

Years ago, when small Jamaican hotels operated with limited resources, they made their own tomato paste and fruit preserves. Such practices are not technologically complex. They simply require investment, training, and leadership. Western Westmoreland could become a national hub for tomato paste, juices, sauces, and tropical fruit beverages such as mango juice, which is increasingly in global demand. Currently, much of Jamaica's mango harvest goes to waste, particularly in Western Westmoreland and even Hanover, where trees bear abundantly but logistics are lacking.

Agro-Processing Opportunities

Agro-processing facilities, even on a modest scale, could ensure that surplus produce is turned into value-added products. This would reduce imports, protect foreign exchange reserves, and offer farmers stable markets. More importantly, it would build pride and viability into agricultural livelihoods.



Fruit Juice Production

Converting surplus mangoes and other fruits into shelf-stable juices and beverages for local and tourist consumption



Tomato Processing

Creating tomato paste, sauces, and other preserved products to reduce imports and provide stable markets for farmers



Preserves and Jams

Developing specialty preserves from local fruits that can be sold to hotels, exported, or marketed as authentic Jamaican products

The Role of the New Negril International Airport



The planned airport in Little London in Western Westmoreland offers a critical opportunity to integrate agriculture with export logistics. The airport is not only a gateway for tourists—it can also serve as a launch pad for fresh produce and agro-processed goods.

Direct Export Access

Farmers will be able to export perishable goods directly to international markets

Efficient Market Reach

Agro-processors can reach international markets faster and more efficiently

Changing Perceptions

Small and medium-scale farmers will begin to see agriculture not as a struggle, but as a viable, rewarding enterprise

This export infrastructure must be inclusive, ensuring that smallholders benefit alongside larger producers.

Agricultural Leadership at the MP Level

Agriculture was once the backbone of Jamaica's economy. Though it has been overshadowed in recent decades, it still holds the power to anchor national development—if guided by visionary leadership. This is not a partisan issue. It is a Jamaican issue.

Agriculture must become one of the most prestigious and well-resourced ministries in government. Agencies such as RADA and the Forestry Department which operate in Westmoreland, must be fully supported and revitalized. Their work on the ground, providing technical training, land management guidance, and climate-smart practices, is indispensable.

Brand Jamaica Through Agriculture

Tourists who visit Jamaica return home with memories of its flavours—avocado, banana, papaya. These are not just foods; they are expressions of Brand Jamaica. With improved production and packaging, these goods can become powerful export commodities.

Integrated Farming Systems

Even modest farms can create remarkable efficiencies. Farmers who raise sheep under orchard trees, for instance, produce meat while managing vegetation and fertilizing the soil—generating triple value through integrated agriculture.

Implementation Plan

Phase 1 (Year 1-2)

- Conduct baseline surveys and stakeholder consultations
- Establish nurseries and initiate training programs

Phase 3 (Year 5)

- Evaluate program outcomes
- Scale successful initiatives

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Phase 2 (Year 3-4)

- Develop agro-processing facilities
- Launch orchard crop planting drives

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Funding

Monitoring & Evaluation

Establish KPIs such as yield increases, employment rates, and reduction in imports. Regularly review progress and adapt strategies accordingly.

- Quarterly progress reviews
- Annual impact assessments
- Stakeholder feedback mechanisms
- Adaptive management approach

Proposed Funding Sources

- Government allocations
- Private sector investments
- International grants and partnerships

A diversified funding approach will ensure sustainability and reduce dependency on any single source.

Partnerships and Vision for the Future

Engage with parish NGOs such as the NCoC, the Westmoreland PDC, Community-based Organisations, educational institutions, the church and international agencies for technical and financial support. Foster public-private partnerships to drive innovation and market access.

In Summary, together, with the State Agencies, NGOs and Communities we can unleash Western Westmoreland's true agricultural potential. The economic logic is clear: every dollar saved on imports and every dollar earned from exports contributes directly to national strength. Moreover, agriculture returns value quickly—generating tax revenue, job creation, and rural renewal. This is not a cost—it is an investment in dignity, community, and national identity.

Westmoreland is rich—rich in land, sunlight, water, tradition, and talent. What it needs is visionary leadership, cohesive policy, and national cooperation. Agriculture can once again become the engine of inclusive growth, the foundation of food security, and the anchor of rural dignity.

The new airport is a catalyst. Agriculture is the engine. Tourism is the partner. The time to act is now.

Let Westmoreland and Jamaica grow what it consumes. Let it lead in what it does best. And let it build a first-world future on the foundation of its soil.

Agriculture is not just Jamaica's past—it is its future.